

23 NOV 1964
106 PES

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2 YARBOROUGH-WARREN COMMISSION (570)

(ALSO 650 PES)

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, NOV. 23 (AP)-AMAZEMENT AT WHAT HE CALLED THE SLOW RESPONSE OF SECRET SERVICE AGENTS WHEN THE ASSASSIN'S BULLETS RANG OUT IN DALLAS WAS EXPRESSED TO THE WARREN COMMISSION BY SEN. RALPH W. YARBOROUGH, D-TEX.

HE INDICATED THEY DIDN'T ACT AS FAST AS TRAINED INFANTRYMEN OR MARINES WOULD HAVE DONE.

YARBOROUGH WAS TWO CARS BEHIND THE PRESIDENT'S LIMOUSINE WHEN KENNEDY WAS ASSASSINATED NOV. 22, 1963. THE CAR IN BETWEEN WAS A SPECIALLY EQUIPPED ONE CARRYING EIGHT SECRET SERVICE AGENTS.

YARBOROUGH GAVE HIS VIEWS IN AN AFFIDAVIT TO THE WARREN COMMISSION. THEY ARE DETAILED IN ONE OF THE VOLUMES OF EVIDENCE WHICH THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION GATHERED IN PREPARING ITS REPORT OF SEPT. 27. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS HAS NOW OBTAINED ACCESS TO TESTIMONY IN SOME OF THE VOLUMES.

YARBOROUGH TOLD OF HEARING THE SHOTS, AND CONTINUED:

"AFTER THE SHOOTING, ONE OF THE SECRET SERVICE MEN SITTING DOWN IN THE CAR IN FRONT OF US PULLED OUT AN AUTOMATIC RIFLE OR WEAPON AND LOOKED BACKWARD. HOWEVER, ALL OF THE SECRET SERVICE MEN SEEMED TO ME TO RESPOND VERY SLOWLY, WITH NO MORE THAN A PUZZLED LOOK.

"IN FACT, UNTIL THE AUTOMATIC WEAPON WAS UNCOVERED, I HAD BEEN LULLED INTO A SENSE OF FALSE HOPE FOR THE PRESIDENT'S SAFETY BY THE LACK OF MOTION, EXCITEMENT OR APPARENT VISIBLE KNOWLEDGE BY THE SECRET SERVICE MEN, THAT ANYTHING SO DREADFUL WAS HAPPENING.

"KNOWING SOMETHING OF THE TRAINING THAT COMBAT INFANTRYMEN AND MARINES RECEIVE, I AM AMAZED AT THE LACK OF INSTANTANEOUS RESPONSE BY THE SECRET SERVICE, WHEN THE RIFLE FIRE BEGAN."

THE PRESIDENTIAL INVESTIGATING COMMISSION, HEADED BY CHIEF JUSTICE EARL WARREN, SAID OF THE SECRET SERVICE "THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THESE MEN FAILED TO TAKE ANY ACTION IN DALLAS WITHIN THEIR POWER THAT WOULD HAVE AVERTED THE TRAGEDY."

THE COMMISSION HAD AVAILABLE TO IT OTHER TESTIMONY BESIDE YARBOROUGH'S, INCLUDING TESTIMONY THAT SOME AGENTS STAYED UP LATE THE PREVIOUS NIGHT AND DRANK MODERATELY.

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THE COMMISSION SAID "IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT THOSE MEN WHO HAD LITTLE SLEEP, AND WHO HAD CONSUMED ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, EVEN IN LIMITED QUANTITIES, MIGHT HAVE BEEN MORE ALERT IN THE DALLAS MOTORCADE IF THEY HAD RETIRED PROMPTLY . . ."

BUT THE COMMISSION REPORT ALSO SAID THAT "THE INSTANTANEOUS AND HEROIC RESPONSE TO THE ASSASSINATION OF SOME OF THE AGENTS CONCERNED WAS IN THE FINEST TRADITION OF GOVERNMENT SERVICE."

YARBOROUGH SAID HE WAS GIVING HIS TESTIMONY NOT TO DISTRESS ANYONE, BUT IN HOPES IT WOULD BE OF USE FOR THE PROTECTION OF FUTURE PRESIDENTS. HE ADDED A POIGNANT DETAIL BY HIS DESCRIPTION OF A SECRET SERVICE MAN LYING ACROSS THE TRUNK OF THE PRESIDENTIAL AUTOMOBILE AS IT SPED AWAY TOWARD A HOSPITAL:

"HE BEAT THE BACK OF THE CAR WITH ONE HAND, HIS FACE CONTORTED BY GRIEF, ANGUISH AND DESPAIR."

IN THEIR TESTIMONY TO THE COMMISSION, THE TWO SECRET SERVICE AGENTS RIDING IN KENNEDY'S CAR ITSELF INDICATED THEY REACTED SWIFTLY TO THE FIRST INDICATION OF TROUBLE.

ROY H. KELLERMAN, 48, THE AGENT IN CHARGE OF THE TRIP, WHO WAS RIDING BESIDE THE DRIVER, SAID HE SWUNG AROUND AT THE SOUND OF THE FIRST SHOT AND SAW KENNEDY WITH BOTH HANDS AT HIS THROAT.

"THAT WAS ENOUGH FOR ME TO VERIFY THAT THE MAN WAS HIT," HE SAID, "SO, IN THE SAME MOTION, I CAME (CQ) RIGHT BACK AND GRABBED THE SPEAKER AND SAID TO THE DRIVER, 'LET'S GET OUT OF HERE; WE ARE HIT!' AND GRABBED THE MIKE AND I SAID (TO THE FORWARD CAR) 'WE ARE HIT! GET US TO A HOSPITAL IMMEDIATELY.'"

HE HAD COMPLETED THE TWO COMMANDS BEFORE THE SECOND AND THIRD SHOTS WERE FIRED, HE SAID, AND, DESCRIBING THE REACTION OF THE DRIVER, SECRET SERVICE AGENT WILLIAM R. GREER, HE SAID, "WE JUST LITERALLY JUMPED OUT OF THE GOD DAMN ROAD."

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